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# PERSUASION<sup>®</sup>

## VIEWS

**HENRY FORD** .....by Joan Kennedy Taylor

**A Word To Our Readers**.....An Editorial

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**JOAN KENNEDY TAYLOR, editor**

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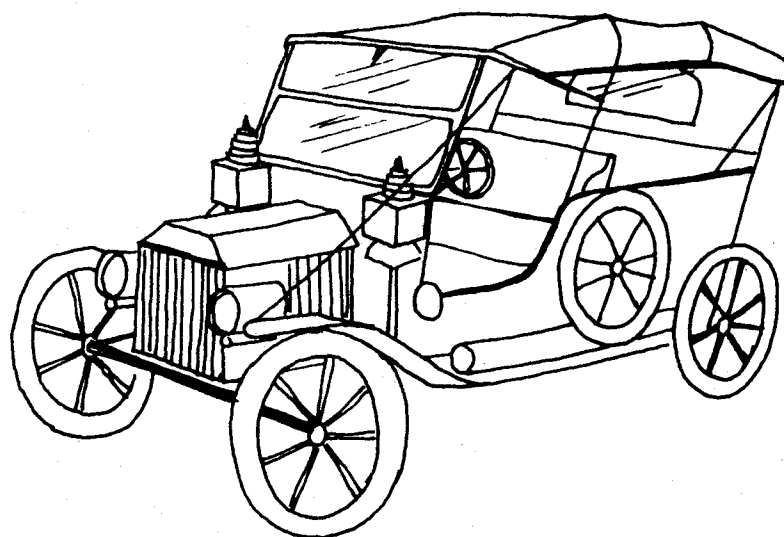
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**VIEWS**



**Henry Ford**

Once upon a time (on July 30, 1863, to be exact) a boy was born on a farm near Dearborn, Michigan. He looked around him and decided that, as he was to write years later, "considering the results, there was too much work on the place." He decided to do something about it.

When he was twelve years old, he saw a "road engine"--a portable steam engine and boiler mounted on wheels that was intended to drive threshing machines and sawmills. He then decided that he wanted to make some kind of self-propelled engine that could do the hardest work on the farm, ploughing.

Well, he did it. In order to do it, he had to pass his apprenticeship in a machine shop; work in the Westinghouse Company of Schenectady repairing road engines; build a steam car that ran; abandon steam and develop an internal combustion gasoline engine; invent a motor car; develop his own ideas of business administration; form a company to manufacture and sell motor cars to order; develop his own ideas about manufacturing; work twelve years on the design of what he called "a universal car," which has gone down in history as the Model T; invent the assembly line and go into mass production, which meant that he could sell automobiles at a price that farmers could afford--and finally, after fifteen years of designing and experimentation on a tractor, having created the designs, engine, business organization, manufacturing methods and market necessary to sell tractors at a profit, he put his tractor on the market.

It was an overnight success.

The boy's name was Henry Ford. By 1920, he was selling three-fourths of all the tractors in the country. By 1930, after much competition from both Ford and General Motors, a company called International Harvester dominated the tractor market, having produced a tractor the farmers preferred. Henry Ford didn't mind very much. In 1922, in a book called *My Life and Work*, he had said that part of his business creed was a disregard of competition. "Whoever does a thing best ought to be the one to do it," he wrote. "It is criminal to try to get business away from another man--criminal because one is then trying to lower for personal gain the condition of one's fellow man, to rule by force instead of by intelligence." And elsewhere in the same book: "I could not see then and am still unable to see that there is not always enough for the man who does his work; time spent in fighting competition is wasted; it had better be spent in doing the work."

He had become, of course, the world's largest automobile producer, so his loss of much of the tractor market to a competitor was not an economic blow. (The Ford Motor Company still makes tractors.) The 1958 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* calls one of his plants, the River Rouge plant at Dearborn, "the largest industrial unit in the world," and the Henry Ford Foundation, which was established with the bulk of his estate, "the richest philanthropic institution of its kind in the world." He also built a hospital, bought and ran a newspaper and a railroad, was a pioneer in aircraft manufacturing and built planes during both World Wars, started a trade school for boys, and a museum, organized the National Farm Chemurgic Council, and owned iron mines, coal mines, forests, and a fleet of lake- and ocean-going ships. He is

reputed to have made more money than any other American who ever lived.

Henry Ford's career seems like a laboratory demonstration of the value of capitalism. His long-range planning and the breadth of his operations are impressive enough in themselves, but there is more to it than that. He himself was highly articulate about his business operations and what he wanted to accomplish, and he was the first to point out that his success was based on the assumption that everyone could profit from a business operation that was properly planned. "We are, in effect, an experimental station to prove a principle," he said (in the first of several books written in collaboration with Samuel Crowther, the previously mentioned *My Life and Work*). "That we do make money is only further proof that we are right."

What was Ford's principle? It was that business should start with the product. "I do not believe in starting to make until I have discovered the best possible thing. This, of course, does not mean that a product should never be changed, but I think that it will be found more economical in the end not even to try to produce an article until you have fully satisfied yourself that utility, design, and material are the best. If your researches do not give you that confidence, then keep right on searching until you find confidence. The place to start manufacturing is with the article. The factory, the organization, the selling and the financial plans will shape themselves to the article. You will have a cutting edge on your business chisel and in the end you will save time. Rushing into manufacturing without being certain of the product is the unrecognized cause of many

business failures. People seem to think that the big thing is the factory or the store or the financial backing or the management.... I spent twelve years before I had a Model T--which is what is known today as the Ford car--that suited me. We did not attempt to go into real production until we had a real product. That product has not been essentially changed.... Our big changes have been methods of manufacturing. They never stand still...by not changing the product we are able to give our energy to the improvement of the making."

When Ford speaks of the best possible product, he means what he is saying. He himself spent several years after he had conceived of the idea of a standardized car which could be produced in quantity looking for a material which would meet his specifications for strength without adding weight. In 1905 he went to a motor race in Palm Beach where a French car was wrecked. Ford picked up a little valve strip stem from the wreck, which looked to him as if it were made out of the material he was looking for. It was made of vanadium steel. Upon inquiry, Ford found that no one in America knew how to make vanadium steel, and the major steel mills were reluctant to try it, as it required too high a temperature. Ford made his car of vanadium steel, but he had to send to England for an expert in steel-making and he had to find a small company in Canton, Ohio, which was willing to experiment with the process if Ford guaranteed them against loss. The first heat was a failure; the second heat was a success.

The same kind of attention to detail went into the planning of every aspect of the Model T. Because Henry Ford was well aware that the essence of busi-

ness production is thinking, he spent months working on his original designs in a one-room workshop, every night. "I cannot say that it was hard work," he said later in *My Life and Work*. "No work with interest in it is ever hard.... I draw a plan and work out every detail on the plan before starting to build. For otherwise one will waste a great deal of time in makeshifts as the work goes on and the finished article will not have coherence. It will not be rightly proportioned. Many inventors fail because they do not distinguish between planning and experimenting." He was always sure of eventual success. "The man who has the largest capacity for work and thought is the man who is bound to succeed. I cannot pretend to say, because I do not know, whether the man who works always, who never leaves his business, who is absolutely intent upon getting ahead, and who therefore does get ahead--is happier than the man who keeps office hours, both for his brain and his hands. It is not necessary to decide the question .... Leisure and work bring different results. If a man wants leisure and gets it--then he has no cause to complain. But he cannot have both leisure and the results of work."

This emphasis on thinking and planning was crucial to Ford's view of industry, for he saw a factory as a place which was constantly innovating and improving methods. Once he had planned and simplified his product in every aspect, he therefore turned his attention to the manufacturing process itself, in order to simplify it. And the essence of this aspect of his planning was the concept of mass production.

Henry Ford is generally credited with having developed the technique of mass production to a

point unknown before him. Some reference books consider him a pioneer in this area, and he is the co-author with James J. Foley of the *Britannica* article, "Mass Production," which was standard for many years. Mass production is a term which refers not only to the manufacture of standardized parts, not only to the massing of men and machinery in one locality, not only to production in quantity --but to the planning of manufacturing processes in such detail that waste of labor and materials is eliminated. The *Britannica's* article on mass production explains: "As to shop detail, the key word to mass production is simplicity. Three plain principles underlie it: (1) the planned orderly and continuous progression of the commodity through the shop; (2) the delivery of work instead of leaving it to the workman's initiative to find it; (3) an analysis of operations into their constituent parts." This planning was applied not only to the final assembly line, but to all the subsidiary manufacturing and assembling and processing and shipping operations which feed into the assembly line.

Ford was constantly striving toward his vision of a world of production in which the economic fundamental of life was that it is natural to have to work to earn one's living and, as he put it, "the moral fundamental is man's right in his labour." He constantly articulated this vision. "Prosperity and happiness can be obtained only through honest effort," and, "both waste and greed are unnecessary. Waste is due largely to not understanding what one does, or being careless in the doing of it. Greed is merely a species of near-sightedness. I have striven toward manufacturing with a minimum of waste, both of materials and of human effort, and then toward distribution at a

minimum of profit, depending for the total profit upon the volume of distribution. In the process of manufacturing I want to distribute the maximum of wage--that is, the maximum of buying power.... Thus everyone who is connected with us--either as a manager, worker, or purchaser--is the better for our existence."

In other words, he decided that if one planned the manufacturing process carefully enough, if one were constantly alerted to new improvements, an industrialist could, by utilizing the techniques of mass production, manufacture a product of top quality which would sell to an expanding market each year because improvements in the process of manufacture would result in lower costs which would be followed by lower prices even as wages could be gradually increased. With this planning, everybody benefits. Because only parts which are up to specification will pass through the machinery, quality is controlled, which benefits the ultimate purchaser. Because the utilization of machinery and planning enormously increases the amount of production that can be done in a day, production costs are reduced, leading to a reduction in price, which also benefits the ultimate purchaser. Because the work is brought to the man and is largely automated, the worker is freed from the burden of exhausting physical labor, which is a benefit to him. He is also benefited because his productivity per unit time is increased by machines, which, even taking into account lower prices, means higher wages for him. Because of the constant search for improved methods, the worker who has ideas is rewarded by bonuses and promotion. To quote Ford's *Encyclopedia Britannica* article on mass production again, "The physical load is lifted off men and placed on machines. The recurrent mental load is shifted

from men in production to men in designing. As to the contention that machines thus become the masters of men, it may be said that machines have increased man's mastery of his environment, and that a generation which is ceaselessly scrapping its machines exhibits few indications of mechanical subjection.

"The need for skilled artisans and creative genius is greater under mass production than without it. Many practical production men assert that mass production requires an increasing degree of mass intelligence. The common work of the world has always been done by unskilled labour, but the common work of the world in modern times is not as common as it was formerly. In almost every field of labour more knowledge and responsibility are required."

Henry Ford was always interested in improving his methods in order to cut his costs, and he did it in ways that no one had thought of before. "If we have a tradition it is this," he wrote in *My Life and Work*: "Everything can always be done better than it is being done." He invested in automatic machinery which would control the standardization of parts and bring the work to the worker. And he invested in higher wages--and found a similar advantage. It is a tenet of Marxist theory which some people still accept without question that in an unregulated economy the factory owner will find it to his self-interest to pay lower and lower wages and charge higher and higher prices, thus exploiting both the worker and the consumer to the point at which they rebel.

Ford's experience was directly contrary to this tenet. He established an eight-hour day, 48-

hour week, and minimum daily wage of \$5.00 at a time when not the minimum but the average wage in his factories was \$2.40 a day for a nine-hour day. This was, incidentally, five years before the 1919 steel strike had as its main issue a 12-hour day and, according to a contemporary report of the Federation of Churches, an "average week of 68.7 hours." In early 1914, before the new wage was established, the Ford Motor Company was hiring at a rate of 53,000 a year to maintain a labor force of 14,000. The new wage practically abolished this turnover. The year after it was instituted, the company had to hire only 6,508 workers, some of whom were filling new jobs created by the growth of the business. "The payment of high wages," Ford wrote, "fortunately contributes to the low costs because the men become steadily more efficient on account of being relieved of outside worries. The payment of five dollars a day for an eight-hour day was one the finest cost-cutting moves we ever made." He became convinced that his wage policy was just a beginning. "The best wages that have up to date ever been paid," he wrote in 1922, "are not nearly as high as they ought to be. Business is not yet sufficiently well-organized and its objectives are not yet sufficiently clear to make it possible to pay more than a fraction of the wages that ought to be paid. That is part of the work we have before us."

At the same time that the Ford Motor Company established its unprecedented wages and hours policy, Ford had all the jobs in the factory analyzed in terms of the abilities and skills necessary, and announced that henceforth there would be no requirements for those seeking work, not even the requirement that workers be able-bodied. Ford thus became one of the first employers to make it a

policy to hire handicapped workers, and he made this policy pay. By analyzing the job skills required, he found that in certain jobs handicapped workers were even more productive than the non-handicapped--a blind worker was better at sorting parts in uncertain light than a seeing worker was, for instance. The only requirement was that the handicapped worker be in fact productive and willing to work. "It would be quite outside the spirit of what we are trying to do," he said, "to take on men because they were crippled, pay them a lower wage, and be content with a lower output. That might be directly helping the men but it would not be helping them in the best way. The best way is always the way by which they can be put on a par with able-bodied men. I believe that there is very little occasion for charity in this world--that is, charity in the sense of making gifts.... I am quite sure that if work is sufficiently subdivided--subdivided to the point of highest economy--there will be no dearth of places in which the physically incapacitated can do a man's job and get a man's wage."

Not only did Ford raise wages and improve hiring policies, he also succeeded in lowering prices as he had planned, "in the face of ever-increasing cost of materials and ever-higher wages." He kept subdividing the work and experimenting with factors such as the speed of the assembly line and the height of the line. He was able by this kind of attention to detail to reduce the time it took to assemble an automobile chassis from 12 hours, 28 minutes each, down to one hour, 33 minutes each. The Model T sold for \$950 in 1909. By 1922, the price was \$295, and it was during this period that wages had been raised and hours shortened. During one particularly successful year he made so much

profit that he decided he had inadvertently kept his price too high, and he gave everyone who had purchased one of his cars that year a refund of \$50. The same price policy was applied to the Fordson tractor. It was introduced soon after the success of the Model T at a price of \$750--by 1920, when he was selling three-fourths of the tractors in the country, the price was \$395.

It seemed as if there were no end to the possible applications of Ford's idea, and he saw it as a solution to all the problems of the world. The same reasoning that led him to hire the handicapped led him to take a hard look at the entire concept of charity. "Why should there be any necessity for alms-giving in a civilized community?" he asked with some asperity. "It is easy to give; it is harder to make giving unnecessary. To make the giving unnecessary we must look beyond the individual to the cause of his misery--not hesitating, of course, to relieve him in the meantime, but not stopping with mere temporary relief. The difficulty seems to be in getting to look beyond to the causes." Applying the principles of having the product as the standard and of subdividing work and saving steps for maximum efficiency, the Ford Hospital was built in Detroit. There are conflicting stories as to why he decided to build it--in *My Life and Work* he says that he subscribed to a building fund once and then was approached again for a resubscription, as the planners had run out of money. He said he would only resubscribe if he could in effect buy out all the other subscribers and build the hospital in his own way. Allan Louis Benson, in his book *The New Henry Ford* (published in 1923), quotes Ford as saying that he built the hospital because his wife got a big bill for a minor operation. "So I decided to build a hospital in which every-

body would be charged what the services rendered to him cost and nobody would be charged more." For whatever reason Ford decided to do it, build it he did, and Benson also reports that the hospital was said to be the best equipped of any hospital in the world, and the best planned. It was laid out to save steps, with patients grouped according to the extent of nursing care needed, a concept today just beginning to be adopted in general hospital planning. All the doctors and nurses were paid yearly salaries competitive with private practice, they worked eight-hour shifts, and only staff physicians were admitted. Ford also insisted on several complete, independent diagnoses for each patient, and the entire hospital contained only private rooms and baths. In 1922, such a room and the care that went with it cost the patient \$4.50 per day, and Ford expected to expand facilities soon and to effect a corresponding decrease in the charge. Since it was a philanthropic institution he did not expect to make a profit on it, but he did expect it to cover its own running costs and also its depreciation. Allan Louis Benson reported, "In some respects, the hospital is conducted like a factory and in other respects like a hotel. The daily newspapers are brought regularly to all patients well enough to read and each patient has a room to himself, as he might if at a hotel."

The Henry Ford Trade School was established on the same basis. "Philanthropy, like everything else, ought to be productive," wrote Ford, "and I believe that it can be. I have personally been experimenting with a trade school and a hospital to discover if such institutions, which are commonly regarded as benevolent, cannot be made to stand on their own feet. I have found that they can be."

The school started in 1916 with six pupils; by 1922 it had 200, and Ford was thinking of expanding it to 700. All the boys in the school got scholarships. They also were paid for making parts, as one aspect of their education. The company buys all parts that pass their usual standards of inspection, and the money goes to the boys, who are thus enabled to help their families while in school or to save for the future. They alternate spending one week in the classroom with two weeks in the shop. As Ford described it, "when they are through, they have a good general education, the beginning of a technical education, and they are so skilled as workmen that they can earn wages which will give them the liberty to continue their education if they like."

He would even have liked to extend his principles to the running of jails. "A well-conducted jail should not only be self-supporting, but a man in jail ought to be able to support his family or, if he has no family, he should be able to accumulate a sum of money sufficient to put him on his feet when he gets out of jail. I am not advocating convict labor or the farming out of men practically as slaves. Such a plan is too detestable for words .... I know that there are laws--foolish laws passed by unthinking men--that restrict the industrial activities of prisons. Those laws were passed mostly at the behest of what is called Labour. They are not for the benefit of the workingman. Increasing the charges on a community does not benefit anyone in the community."

Ford's ventures into other areas of production--blast furnaces, rolling mills, lumber--was generally in order to cut costs or eliminate waste in the production of his automobiles. His purchase

of the Detroit, Toledo & Ironton Railway was an example. The railway was near his factories, but it was run so inefficiently that he couldn't use it to ship his freight on because it didn't keep to its schedules. So he bought it. He describes it thus: "We bought the railway because it interfered with our plans. Then we had to do something with it. The only thing to do was to run it as a productive enterprise, applying to it exactly the same principles as were applied in every department of our industries."

The first thing that he did was to close the executive office, abolish all titles and offices not required by law, and disband the legal department (which was extensive) by settling all outstanding claims. The second thing that he did was to raise wages to \$6.00 a day, rehabilitate the road, overhaul the rolling stock, and insist that no matter what, the trains must go through on time. (Ford's old principle that the product is the important thing and determines the shape of the business.) In short order, the line's deficit became a surplus. Immediately Ford reduced rates in order to get more business, until stopped by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Whatever happened to Henry Ford? Why with this brilliant example of what productivity can accomplish if untrammelled, with this demonstration that capitalism operates at no one's expense is our industry still sunk in a morass of ever-widening regulation? Why isn't The Ford Foundation setting up hospitals and schools in accordance with Ford's principles, all over the country?

The story of Henry Ford is eloquent proof of the thesis that demonstrations, no matter how bril-

liant, don't work unless they have ideas behind them. And Henry Ford combined his marvelous productive inventiveness with a rural anti-intellectualism which negated the impact of his genius.

Together with his friend Thomas Edison, he fought the gold standard. "Ford is thoroughly convinced," wrote Allan Benson, "that the gold standard is one of the devices by means of which the people are impoverished and the development of industry retarded." Although he held that the government was essentially negative, and could do nothing constructive about poverty or philanthropy except "by ceasing to be a burden on the community," Ford was perfectly willing to concede to government the power to control and manipulate money as part of its policing function, because he had a profound mistrust of speculators. During the First World War, the government built a dam and public nitrate plants near Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River. Ford wanted to buy this property from the government during the early twenties, and offered \$5 million for the nitrate plants and a 100-year lease on Wilson Dam at a low rental. According to Benson, "He wanted the Government to complete the Muscle Shoals water power properties and lease them to him. Objection was made that the Government could not afford to spend the money. Ford said the Government could issue currency, secured by the value of the properties, and complete the work without the payment of a cent of interest."

In view of this attitude, it is not so surprising that Ford did not like to be called a capitalist, and did not consider himself to be one. A capitalist was a man who invested money in businesses in the hope of profit, and Ford saw this only as clogging up the wheels of business. He not only specifically repudiated the title of capitalist, but

he attacked speculators and bankers. "Speculation in things already produced--that is not business. It is just more or less respectable graft." (*My Life and Work*)

Farmers traditionally do not care for banks, as banks often hold their mortgages; in this country they have been in favor of going off the gold standard and against speculation in commodities. In this respect, Ford always remained a farmer, and he did also in his vision of the ideal society. He experimented with a model farm of 9,000 acres (on which, typically, he succeeded in doing the entire year's work in 21 days), and he thought that the factory of the future would be in the country, with work planned in such a way that the worker would spend part of the year working on the land and the rest of the year in the factory.

A large part of his reason for advocating such a plan was that he thought it would be healthy for his workers. Ford has been accused of paternalism in his labor policies, largely because his method of fighting the union in the early days was to provide better working conditions than any union dared ask for. But one must admit that the charge is justified in some respects. He instituted a "Sociology Department" in the company, whose function was to send investigators to visit every employee's home; he pried into the marital relations of his employees; he used the plant police as spies on his workers. A memoir by Harry H. Bennett, who was the head of his plant police (called the Ford Service Department), claims that in the long battle against the United Auto Workers which ended in enforced unionization in 1941, Ford actually stocked up on arms and tear gas. Bennett also says that Ford successfully broke an attempt by the Ku Klux

Klan to establish a foothold in the company by ordering his employees to join it and then vote down Klan policies. This tactic worked--but when he ordered them to join the union for the same purpose, the union was not broken.

Ford was outspoken against Wall Street, capitalists and the gold standard; he held an essentially agrarian view of society, and he was a moralistic busybody towards his workers. Even more serious, he was an anti-Semite. He circulated (and insisted that his dealers also circulate) literature purporting to support the claim that there was an international Jewish conspiracy, and occasionally he peppered his autobiographical works with references such as the following: "There has been observed in this country certain streams of influence which were causing a marked deterioration in our literature, amusements, and social conduct; business was departing from its old-time substantial soundness; a general letting down of standards was felt everywhere. It was not the robust coarseness of the white man...but a nasty Orientalism...all traceable to one racial source."

It is hard for anyone who has lived after Hitler to view this sort of attitude with any degree of toleration at all, but it must be pointed out that even though Ford was willing to indulge in this degree of scurrilousness, he himself had no idea which of his employees were Jewish, as he never asked them any questions about education or religion. The most tangible result of this attitude was that it served to discredit all of his ideas with intellectuals and to cast a dark shadow over his isolationist stand at the beginning of World War II.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in *The Crisis of the Old Order*, has this to say about Ford's influence. "But in a sense, the most influential of all business leaders was Henry Ford; and Ford was the more revealing, because, while a great producer in the old tradition, he nonetheless led the whole business community to think in the new terms of promotion, of distribution, and of statesmanship. A man of genius, he was at the same time narrow, ignorant, and mean-spirited. He carried a gun, believed in reincarnation, and hated bankers, doctors, Jews, Catholics, fat men, liquor, tobacco, prisons and capital punishment.... Yet for all his zaniness, Ford had a compelling vision of a new age. Modern mass production, he was convinced, had created an economy that was capable of anything; the fact of abundance must therefore revolutionize the philosophy of business. High output, low prices, and high wages must be the new objectives. Only by steadily raising wages and reducing prices could the business community maintain the buying power of the people. 'These fundamentals,' he liked to add, 'are all summed up in the single word "service".' If business did not serve, it would not survive." (p. 73)

I call your attention to the word "service" in the preceding paragraph. For it was indeed Henry Ford who introduced not only the practice of the assembly line, but the concept that the businessman's function was to serve the public into American industrial circles. Did he mean by the term that the businessman should be an abject servant, or did he mean merely that people would buy his product only if they found it to be of value? Both. Sometimes he said: "It is the degree of the comfort of the people at large--not the size of the manufacturer's bank balance--that evidences

prosperity. The function of the manufacturer is to contribute to this comfort. He is an instrument of society and he can serve society only as he manages his enterprises so as to turn over to the public an increasingly better product at an ever-decreasing price, and at the same time to pay to all those who have a hand in his business an ever-increasing wage, based upon the work they do. In this way and in this way alone can a manufacturer or anyone in business justify his existence."

And sometimes he put it the other way: "So long as leadership thinks more of money than it does of service, the waste will continue. Waste is prevented by farsighted not by shortsighted men. Shortsighted men think first of money. They cannot see waste. They think of service as altruistic instead of as the most practical thing in the world."

It seems obvious from reading Ford's writings that he clung to the ambiguity--that he wanted it because it enabled him to say, "The genius of the United States of America is Christian in the broadest sense."

But what would happen if the business community did not "maintain the buying power of the people"? In his statement on Ford, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., goes on to say, "Ford's spotlighting of purchasing power brought a wholly new element into business economics. For businessmen of an earlier generation, as Edward A. Filene put it, buying power had 'just happened,' in the New Era, businessmen had the responsibility of producing it--or the system would break down. The task was to keep the stream of demand flowing."

I

In 1929, the system did break down. The stream of demand stopped, and a good case can be made for its having been caused by the very government manipulation of money which Henry Ford had advocated. But who was blamed for the breakdown? Why, the men who had claimed credit for the running of the system--Henry Ford and his colleagues. They were no longer serving society.

Ford lived to see compulsory unionization and confiscatory taxation imposed upon him in the name of the "service" he had advocated. And he did not know how to object. When the Wagner Act was passed, he refused to discuss it. When, under the New Deal, industries were organized to regulate production by signing NRA codes, the automobile industry was organized without Henry Ford--but he kept the wages and hours provisions, which many signers didn't. The last seventeen years of the life of the man who was perhaps America's greatest industrialist must have been bewildering. From 1930 until his death in 1947, Henry Ford was involved in controversy and lost much his earlier popularity and much of his control over his property. When his son Edsel died in 1943, Ford came out of retirement to become once again President of Ford Motor Company, but he was by then 80 years old. Two years later, he retired in favor of his grandson, and two years after that he was dead.

In his book, *We Never Called Him Henry*, Harry Bennett relates that after Ford's second retirement, he received a telephone call from him. "Mr. Ford told me that he wanted me to go into the plant and shut it down. Then he began weeping and became incoherent."

He was asserting his ownership at last.

---Joan Kennedy Taylor

## A Word To Our Readers

Last July, *Persuasion* alerted its readers to the existence of the civil suit of Howard Katz and David Baumann against various officials of the United States, to enjoin them from enforcing the Universal Military Training and Service Act. In August, we published an article by Lawrence A. Scott which discussed the legal and moral implications of the suit.

Since that time, we have received more letters than we can answer, asking for advice on personal problems connected with the draft. These letters generally fall into one of two categories, which we'd like to comment on here.

As we are sure all our readers know, a man who objects to war on religious grounds may seek to qualify as a conscientious objector. There are several Quaker organizations which have made themselves the experts in this field, one of which is the Draft Counseling Service of the American Friends Service Committee, 15 Rutherford Place, New York, New York 10003. They will give advice to anyone seeking further information on the obligations imposed on him by the draft law. A spokesman for the Draft Counseling Service warns that anyone who is considering registering as a C.O. should get professional counseling on how to proceed before he takes any action whatsoever; he must assume that he will wind up in court and must plan his official acts

so as to present the best possible case.

The law states that a conscientious objector must believe in a "Supreme Being." However, the lawyer who handled the Katz and Baumann case tells us that the interpretation of this section of the statute was considerably widened by the recent Supreme Court decision in the Seegar case. The Court ruled that Seegar believed in a Supreme Being even though he did not claim to do so. This means that there are now certain ways in which you may qualify for a religious exemption even if you don't think that you believe in God. But again, you should seek competent professional advice.

The other kind of letter which we have received is not so easy to answer. This is the letter whose writer claims that he wishes to follow in the footsteps of Katz and Baumann and refuse to be inducted, because he opposes the draft.

Now the first point which must be made is that Katz and Baumann did not refuse to be inducted. As a matter of fact, one of the important points to notice about the Katz and Baumann case is that it was an attempt to test the constitutionality of the Universal Military Training and Service Act *without putting themselves in any jeopardy that they were not already in*. They did not disobey the law; they sued the government. When the Supreme Court refused to review their case, they were in exactly the same position that they had been in when the case started--David Baumann was inducted into the Army, an action which had already commenced when he began the case, and Howard Katz was a reservist in the National Guard. They did not go to prison.

There is, to be sure, a place in American law for the test case, and it is sometimes necessary to technically break the law in order to test it. This was done by the Planned Parenthood Association when they tested the Connecticut laws against the dissemination of birth control information in *Griswold v. Connecticut*; it is a method which has been used to test many segregation laws in the South by the N.A.A.C.P.; and it is the method used by Vivian Kellems in her unsuccessful attempt to challenge the constitutionality of the withholding tax law. (See the review of her *Toil, Taxes and Trouble*, in the July 1965 *Persuasion*.)

But a test case is a legal matter, and the first thing one needs is legal information. It should be based on a constitutional objection to the law in question which has not been ruled on and is not about to be ruled on by the Supreme Court. In other words, the purpose of a test case is to get the law changed. To disobey the law when one has no reason to think that one can win the case accomplishes no more than would setting oneself on fire on the White House lawn.

In the specific case of the draft, we know of no grounds on which it can be tested further at this time. The 1918 draft cases ended in the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court that the draft was not "involuntary servitude" according to the meaning of the Thirteenth Amendment--so no matter how much one *feels* that it is, legally it is not. The Katz case was not judged on its merits, but on technical matters. However, there is another case pending before the Supreme Court as we go to press which is being argued on exactly the same grounds of the Ninth Amendment and the Nuremberg Charter: the case of *Wood v. U.S.* If that case

is ruled upon, the decision will be definitive. If it is refused, it will not be on procedural grounds; it will mean that the Supreme Court does not wish to consider a Ninth Amendment challenge to the draft at this time. And no one can force it to.

However, the outlook is by no means hopeless. Since last July when we first wrote about the issue of the draft, opposition to it has gained an astonishing amount of spontaneous support from the public at large. Organizations as different in philosophy as the Students for a Democratic Society, the Young Americans for Freedom, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have called for the abolition of the draft. *The Nation* and *New Republic* have long campaigned against the draft; they have now been joined by *Playboy*, which published a major article by Representative Thomas Curtis on the subject, and most recently by *Glamour*, with an editorial in its May issue calling for the abolition of the draft and the establishment of a volunteer army. Two new Republican Senators (Senator Brooke of Massachusetts and Senator Hatfield of Oregon) have joined several Republican House members (notably Representative Curtis) in public opposition to the draft.

It is true that our government at the moment seems entrenched in the assumption that it can take not only its citizens' money but their lives in the name of the national interest, and can waste them equally. But one does not stop the juggernaut by throwing oneself in front of it, and we implore our readers not to do so. For our approach to politics is with the conviction that only by pre-

senting and defending ideas, not by civil disobedience or useless sacrifice, can we change the culture. We stand for the power of reason. That is why we call ourselves *Persuasion*.

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